

# Provision of individual academic skills advising services in Australian institutional Academic Language and Learning teams: A snapshot of the current landscape

**Stephen T. Campitelli**

*Academic Skills, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria, 3010, Australia*

Email: [cas@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:cas@unimelb.edu.au)

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Individual consultations or 1-1s, face-to-face appointments between an Academic Language and Learning (ALL) advisor and a student have long been part of the higher education advising context in Australia. Nevertheless, individual appointments represent a contested space, particularly in regard to the emergence of generative AI platforms that seek to perform a similar role to that of the human advisor, but also due to questions concerning 1-1 feasibility and scalability. Despite a great deal of interest in 1-1s as a core part of the advisor role, a gap was identified in terms of current information regarding their delivery among ALL teams in Australia. Therefore, this research, undertaken in the early months of 2025 with 41 ALL teams, sought to shed light on how 1-1s are delivered across the country. Examining a range of delivery aspects including role and team naming, staffing, team location, numbers of 1-1s delivered in 2024, trends, ratios, advantages of and challenges to human facilitated advising, the paper concludes that, even in the face of clear and ongoing questions concerning its existence, the individual consultation is still very much a present and valued part of ALL work.

**Key Words:** individual consultations, academic language and learning, 1-1s, individual appointments.

## 1. Introduction

Academic Language and Learning (ALL) advising has existed in some form as an institution-provided service with a student-facing skills development mission since the 1970s (Barthel et al., 2021). The work enacted by ALL teams is somewhat universal in that it covers some form of individual consultation (IC) or 1-1 services, group work in workshops and presentations, resource development, and work with academics. Further, the core mission of ALL teams is the same: to serve the developmental needs of students.

Despite this universality of work and purpose, the ways in which ALL teams enact these roles varies across the profession. Most facets of the ALL role, down to what we call ourselves as teams and as advisors, or indeed, advisers, the size of teams, the number of ongoing and casual staff, the ratio of staff to students, the number and nature of 1-1 services offered, when they are offered, the parameters that lie around them, the value seen in them and so on, has perhaps not always been so well understood across the profession.

A part of the reason for this lack of understanding is that we are not always as good at information sharing as we could be. Indeed, as noted by Malkin and Chanock (2018), “uncertainty about who and what we are, as a profession, has been with us from the beginning and persists today” (p. A16). ALL teams tend towards a busy-ness, motivated out of a want for students to do well but also, perhaps, driven by a need to show our worth to our institutions, speaking to a paradigmatic marginalisation narrative. The persistence of this narrative in relation to very real existential challenges says it is not without foundation. The latest such challenge, particularly to the 1-1, has come in the form of generative AI platforms as providers of advice and feedback on student writing. Despite these challenges, however, the role of the human academic skills advisor and, more specifically, the 1-1, persist.

As a result, to some extent, of the metaphoric and literal distances between us, ALL teams are often siloed in their institutions without a great deal of understanding of how other teams are structured, what they do, how their 1-1s function and how they conduct their role in everyday terms. That said, however, a number of people, papers, programs and initiatives have sought to provide sources of information sharing about who we are and what we do. For example, in order to try to better understand the field and who works in it, Malkin and Chanock (2018) conducted research examining advisor demographics, what advisors bring to the profession, role classification and positioning, frustrations and satisfactions, and challenges and solutions within a shifting work context. In addition, with a view to bridging information gaps and in terms of documenting the industry, the paper, *Defining the dynamic role of Australian academic skills advisors* by Evans, Henderson and Ashton-Hay (2019) sought to explore the roles of Australian academic skills advisors, specifically looking at unit placement, advisor role, qualifications and experience, required training and pedagogy used in 1-1s with students.

Furthermore, in professional development terms, the biennial conferences facilitated by the Association for Academic Language and Learning (AALL) and its predecessor, Language and Academic Skills (LAS), have existed in some form since 1982 (Barthel et al., 2021). A valued source of connection and communication, they frequently offer presentations on 1-1 service delivery and pedagogy. More recently, a need for more industry information sharing and networking was one of the drivers for the AALL *Connect. Inspire. Share* (CIS) professional development series with some of its most well-received sessions covering 1-1s.

Finally, with a view to comparative information sharing among teams, Alex Barthel initiated an annual table of *ALL centres/units in Australian universities* which, from 1998 to 2015, documented and shared information on what ALL teams called themselves, contacts, web details and staff to student ratios, with another final table published under AALL funding in 2021 (Barthel et al., 2021; Private Communication).

Very much within the spirit of information gathering and sharing as epitomised by these endeavours, particularly Barthel’s ALL centre tables, and propelled by a professional curiosity as to how 1-1s are conducted in other teams, this research was undertaken to document how Australian institutional ALL teams deliver individual consultations, in particular, and to explore information around their provision. But why this focus?

This has been a focus area because the 1-1 is perhaps the area of ALL work which continues to have existential challenges presented to it, the latest being generative AI. It is not within the scope of this paper to address these challenges in detail and, given that this research aims to be a snapshot landscape review, neither is it the place to provide an in-depth rationale as to why 1-1s should be examined. That said, in short, the profession values this space because 1-1s meet the students face-to-face where they are in their study journey. They seek to equip students with skills to enable them to become more independent, confident and self-regulated learners, that is, learners able to generate thoughts, feelings and actions directed toward goal attainment (Stadler et al., 2024). Moreover, as Nosrati et al. (2025) remind us, 1-1s “offer a distinct, personalised service that allows advisors to work closely with students on academic, social, and wellbeing issues” (p. 84)

and are “dynamic sites of academic, personal, and professional growth” (p. 87). Schmidt and Schneider (2025) speak to the depth of the role proposing the ALL advisor embodies identities of “educator, mentor, counsellor and critical friend” and the forward-facing, developmentally focused nature of 1-1s in which the advisor and student develop true partnerships “which can last for an hour, a week, a month or years” (p. 82). These all point to affective and transformative dimensions of the role that have a depth and breadth beyond the transactional, thereby providing students with a human connection in an increasingly tech-driven world. Despite their centrality to advisor identity and role, 1-1s are a source of the vulnerability ALL teams often feel as they are by their nature expensive when viewed as isolated events. As such, in some quarters, as Evans et al. (2019) note, they may be viewed as an “expendable luxury” (p. 1123) if their role is not correctly understood, and as a service that is “not a scalable way to improve student learning outcomes” (Kelly et al., 2024, p. 6). To address these possible misconceptions, 1-1s need to be understood particularly in relation to the challenges mooted as possible replacements to the role.

Therefore, in order to explore a landscape of individual consultation delivery, this research explored:

- team and staff titles
- institution, ALL team size and composition
- staff to student ratios
- team placement
- role classification
- offering of and details concerning advisor facilitated 1-1s including format, number, reach, trends, length, parameters, timing, access and alternate offerings in place of 1-1s
- other ALL service offerings
- impact of gen AI on 1-1s
- and, finally, the main advantages of the institution providing person facilitated 1-1 advising services.

Unsurprisingly, the research yielded a very rich and interesting data set.

To explore each section in a more digestible form, this paper takes a combined Results and Discussion approach, presenting sections of the findings and discussing them immediately before moving to the next section. Again, as a reporting snapshot, this is a landscape analysis of where the industry sits in a particular period of time, early 2025, and is not an extended discourse on or rationalisation for individual consultations.

To examine the landscape, the paper first looks at the participant profile, then staffing information, then moves on to a detailed examination of the nature of individual consultations before finishing with an examination of some of the broader issues around delivery with qualitative questions concerning 1-1 service provision.

## 2. Methods and participants

Conducted over the early months of 2025, the survey took the form of a Qualtrics mixed methods survey consisting of 22 questions, 17 quantitative and 5 qualitative (see [Appendix A](#)). Responses were confidential and anonymous. Respondents could, as an option, provide contact details for the purposes of subsequent detailed post-publication and/or reporting or presentation of results undertaken by the researcher/author.

Forty-three ALL teams within Australian tertiary institutions or organisations (1 private provider) were approached to voluntarily participate in the survey. Of these, 42 teams agreed to participate, one team declined and one initially agreed to participate but ultimately did not send responses. One team sent two sets of independent responses maintaining the services provided by each ALL

team within the institution were entirely separate and responses to questions so being different as unable to be merged. As a result, there were 41 participant responses from ALL teams in institutions across all states and territories of Australia.

Of these, 9 are in Victoria, 8 in both NSW and Queensland, 5 in Western Australia, 3 in South Australia, 3 are multi-campus (i.e. different states), 2 in each of ACT and Tasmania and 1 in the Northern Territory.

The respondents consisted of Managers or Team Leaders, Academic Advisors or team members with an understanding of the 1-1 service provision within their team.

### 3. Results and discussion

#### 3.1. Team and institution

##### 3.1.1. Name of the ALL team or unit

Answers were classified according to ‘primary focus’ terms, i.e. those which were assigned implied primacy by being in the most prominent or primary position or ‘secondary focus’ in which a term is placed after the initial position. For example, Academic Skills and Learning Skills teams have differing primary focus terms – Academic and Learning – but the same secondary focus term, Skills.

‘Academic’ is the most frequent primary focus term with 14 (34%) of teams placing it in the initial or prominent position, e.g. Academic Success or Academic Skills, the latter being the most used combination with 9 teams (22%) being called some variation of the two terms, Academic and Skills.

‘Learning’ is the primary focus for 11 (26%) teams, e.g. Learning Hub, Learning Support, Learning Skills; while ‘Student’ was the initial term for 8 (19%) teams, e.g. Student Success, Student Academic Success, Student Learning. The remaining 8 teams use variations on Study (3), Language (2), Library (2) and Support (1).

In terms of secondary focus, the most frequently used term is Skills with 14 teams (34%), followed by Learning 10, Success 6, Support 4, and Services, Hub and Zone with 1 each.

As a result, ALL teams in Australia are most likely to be known as **Academic Skills** or some variation of such.

The commonality of the two terms ‘academic’ and ‘learning’ has its grounding in the original terminology of such teams being referred to as Language and Academic Skills (LAS) which evolved into Academic Language and Learning in the early 2000s (Malkin & Chanock, 2018) as perhaps the profession sought to embrace a broader three-part focus with the naming shift. It is no surprise then that 60% of team names take either Academic or Learning as their primary focus with Skills as the secondary term. ‘Student’ is the next most commonly occurring term, again, making sense in relation to the student-facing mission of ALL teams.

In line with the shift in service focus from a deficit/remedial one to a more developmentally oriented one (Malkin & Chanock, 2018; Evans et al., 2019; Barthel et al., 2021) it also makes sense that deficit framing of services has seen a change as summed up well by one respondent: “*We get to know our students on a personal level, and this breaks down barriers such as stigma around seeking ‘help’ or ‘support’.* *We changed our name in case there was a stigma associated with Student Learning ‘Support’.*” Though the ‘stigma of help seeking’ does not appear frequently in responses (mentioned two times in total), it is there, with one respondent noting that, as demand for 1-1 services grows, “*engagement remains a challenge due to the significant stigma associated with seeking academic help*”. As such, with a view to the longer-term ALL service transition away from a perceived deficit focus on support, help or assistance to a full continuum developmental positioning for any student, it is no surprise then that *academic* and *learning* are the most frequently prominent terms.

### 3.1.2. Role title of the academic advising staff

Some teams have multiple role titles, so  $N = 57$ . Again, based on a primary and secondary focus classification approach, the same two terms are used, but interestingly, the result is flipped. The most frequently occurring primary term for the ALL professional role is ‘Learning’ with 27 (47%) teams using it as the primary role term, e.g. Learning Advisor / Adviser, Learning Success Advisor, with Learning and Advisor/Adviser as the most common combination (more on spelling in the secondary section below) with 18 teams (31%) using that pairing.

The second most used term is ‘Academic’ 14 (24%), e.g. Academic Skills Adviser/Advisor with 6 (10%) teams using this role title. The remaining names are variations on Maths / Literacy / STEM (7), Language (4), Student (3), Peer (2), Lecturer (1).

In terms of secondary focus, Advisor/Adviser is clearly the most frequently used word with 43 teams (75%) using one of the terms, while there is also a clear ‘winner’ in the *o* versus *e* spelling stakes with the split coming out as Advisor 25 (43%) and Adviser 18 (31%). As a result, herewith the majority spelling *Advisor* is used.

Other secondary terms used are Officer, Facilitator, Specialist and Educator, all used by 2 teams, with Coach, Partner, Mentor, Member, Coordinator and Lecturer used by 1.

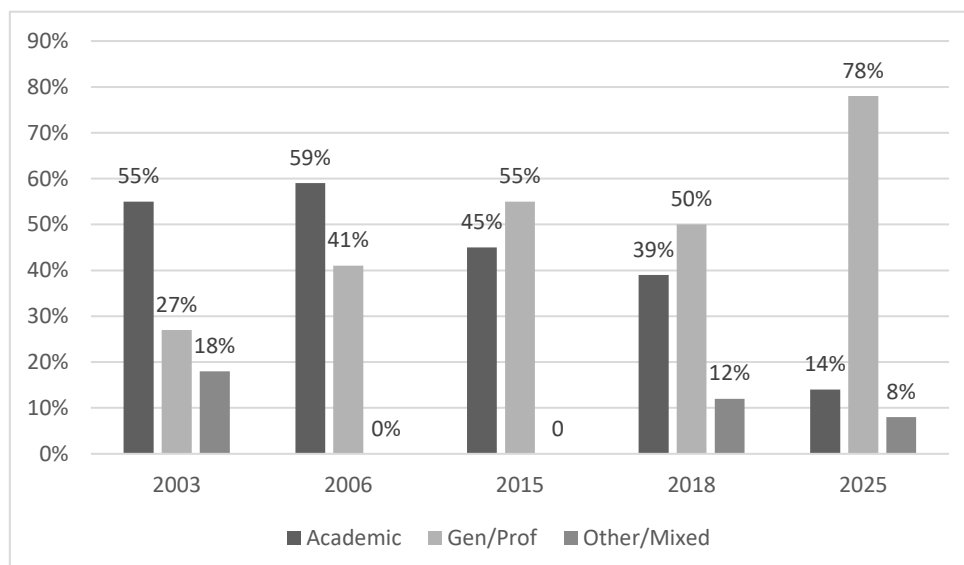
As a linguistic side note, 8 of the secondary terms mentioned just above, display the *o* versus *e* spelling divide: 4 use the Latin-derived suffix *o* spelling, while an equal 4 use the Greek-derived suffix *e* form. Further, the most frequently used ALL staff role title is Learning Adviser/Advisor at 18 with the spelling, again, evenly split at 9 and 9 illustrating that the *o* / *e* divide is not an unusual one and perhaps, with our feet in clearly both camps and tongue firmly in cheek, we are giving an unintentional nod to the equal importance of Socratic dialogue and the Roman Empire.

So, as a role, we are most commonly called **Learning Advisors** or **Advisers**.

### 3.1.3. Academic or Professional classification

ALL staff are classified predominantly as Professional with 32 (78%) teams responding as such, while 6 (14%) are classified as Academic and 3 (8%) Other / Both.

A twenty-year trend shows a clear shift towards the role being a predominantly professional one. Malkin and Chanock (2018, p. A20) cite three sets of classification statistics, their own and 2003 and 2015 figures from Barthel. The 2006 figures are from Barthel (as cited in Barthel et al., 2021, p. 5).



**Figure 1.** ALL staff classification breakdown % 2003-2025.

The trend away from academic towards professional classification is clear, with ALL staff going from 55% to 14% academic and 27% to 78% professional, representing a significant transition of the role from a largely academic to a largely professional one.

While this paper did not ask for respondents' thoughts on the classification of the role, there are some historical notes worth briefly visiting. Barthel (2021) points out that in the 1990s, as the profession evolved, the nature and classification of advisor positions as general or academic staff was a source of contention, with administrations tending to see the role as non-academic and remedial despite it being similar to some academic roles, taking in different forms of teaching and, increasingly, forms of research. Malkin and Chanock (2018) offer two views on the shift in status noting that a professional classification may "allow more freedom to work creatively, and to focus on students without pressure to publish research" (p. 6). The counter to this, they note, is a possible frustration in terms of research and promotion opportunities and a possible barrier to collaborating with staff for whom "academic status conferred credibility" (p. 6). Perhaps another view of the professional classification though is that, in some ways, it may contribute to defining the 'neutral' third space positioning academic skills advisors hold in the tertiary landscape in which ALL staff are not academics or students, but as professionals something else again, while firmly aligned with both.

The profession has clearly transformed from an academic to a professional one, interestingly, as it simultaneously made the transition from a more deficit-focused remedial one to a conceptually broader more developmental role.

#### 3.1.4. Location or positioning within institution

This question sought to establish in some ways the physical location but perhaps also the perceptual in terms of where teams 'see' themselves. Of the 41 responses, 30 (73%) place themselves as being centrally positioned or under the auspices of what appeared to be a central group, (e.g. the office of the DVC), while 11 teams (27%) identified as being either physically situated in the institution's Library, which may mean they are part of a central team, but offered their primary 'identity' as library-based.

Interestingly, only one team has its advisors embedded in faculties indicating that it is not general practice to physically situate teams within faculties, while further suggesting that most ALL teams see students from all study areas. Research conducted by Evans et al. (2019) yielded similar results with 25 out of the 29 of the teams in their study (86%) identifying as "Centralised and available across the university" (p. 1125). Malkin and Chanock (2018) note that this central positioning can be a reflection of an historic shift to a more generic skills approach, as opposed to an embedded one, where teams "find their distance from the disciplines increased" (p. A17). That said, many responses to later questions indicate in-faculty or discipline specific work still represents a key component of the ALL role, one connected inextricably to 1-1 work, suggesting that ALL educators do not need to be physically within faculties to work within them effectively.

At this author's ALL team, for example, this transition was undertaken a few years ago when advisors were, although part of a central team, located physically 'out' in faculties where they saw, for the most part, students from the faculty in which they were based. The service delivery model was 99% in-person, mostly in-faculty (i.e. physically within a faculty office) and 1% online through Zoom or Skype. With the onset of the COVID pandemic, service delivery quickly pivoted to a fully online model where students could make 1-1 bookings with any advisor and 1-1s and workshops were delivered through Zoom. Post-COVID, it was felt the system was working, students and faculty made no motions to want the return of in-faculty or in-person 1-1s. So, it is worth noting that, although many discipline-specific group workshops returned to largely being in-person sessions facilitated in classrooms, the online model for 1-1s has continued to the present where 99% of 1-1 consultations are now carried out via Zoom with 1% in-person in a 180-degree flip of the service model.

This model for 1-1s may have persevered for four reasons: 1) requiring only a computer, appointments are easy to attend for both parties – students can join from wherever is convenient, even overseas, and it gives staff greater flexibility; 2) fewer delays with students being held up getting to the in-person appointment; 3) with no physical advisor presence, and granting there to exist at least some power distance present in the context, students *may* find the distance provided by the remote context less intimidating; and 4) with the Zoom context being literally face-to-face as opposed to the in-person context often being side-to-side, it may, even subconsciously, *seem* more focused and ‘present’.

Clearly, as shown in Section 3.2.2, although the majority of 1-1s are delivered online, many ALL teams continue to meet students in-person and the offering of choice speaks to a flexibility of the service

### 3.1.5. Student population (headcount) of the institution

Student populations of institutions are shown by total headcount as a range, rather than EFTSL (Equivalent Full-Time Student Load) as advisors work with students no matter their study load.

**Table 1.** Student population by headcount range.

Student headcount range	Number of universities
1,000-10,000	3
10,000-20,000	5
20,000-30,000	11
30,000-40,000	8
40,000-50,000	4
50,000-60,000	4
60,000-70,000	3
>70,000	3

The largest institution is approximately 86,000 students, while the lowest has around 2,300 students. With an average headcount of 35,825 students, unsurprisingly, ALL teams mostly (47%) work in mid-range sized universities.

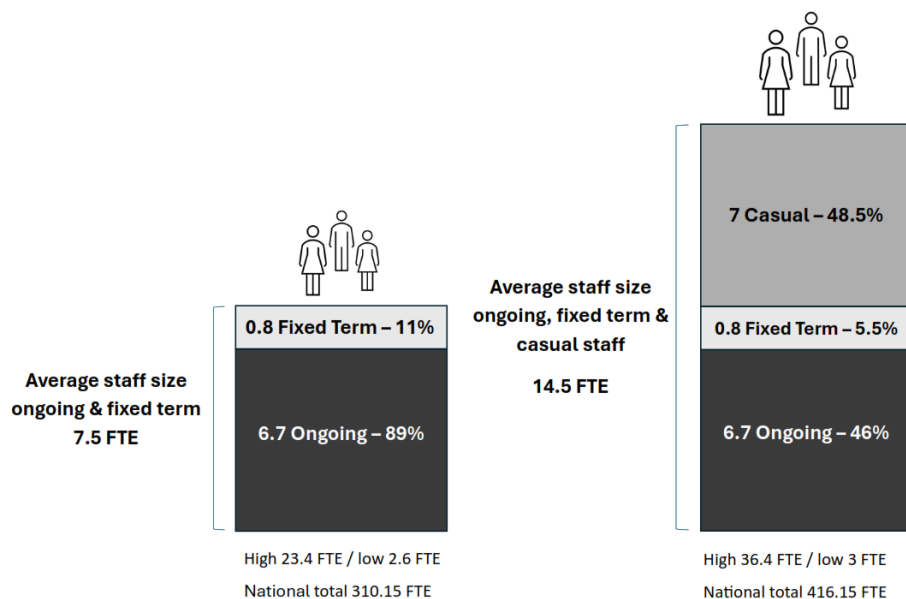
### 3.1.6. Size and composition of ALL team

This question asked about the size of teams in terms of number of ongoing staff (i.e. salaried, permanent positions with no specified end date), fixed term staff (i.e. contracts with specified end date, often one year) or casual staff. This included all team staff and was examined both with and without the presence of casual staff as, at some institutions, there can be two profiles of staffing during the academic year; for example, peak demand periods, where casuals come on to support ongoing and fixed term staff work, and non-peak, e.g. between semesters, when casuals may not be employed.

The average staff size across the teams *without* including casual staff is **7.5** full time equivalent (FTE) consisting of an average 6.7 ongoing staff (89%) and 0.8 fixed term (11%). The national total staff was **310** FTE with a high of 23.4 FTE and a low of 2.6 FTE.

Taking casuals into the staffing mix, the national total is **416.15** FTE. The average nearly doubles to **14.5** FTE including an average casual staffing of 7 FTE, with a team high of 36.4 FTE and a low of 3 FTE.

Inclusion of casuals sees the percentage mix now at a very different looking ongoing 46%, fixed term 5.5% and casual 48.5% underpinning, on the one hand, the importance of casuals to the delivery of ALL work, but also perhaps pointing to a casualisation of the role in line with broader staffing trends at tertiary institutions in the past 10-15 years. These results are captured visually in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Average ALL staff sizes without and with casual staff 2024.

Other results:

- **Ongoing staff:** 40<sup>1</sup> out of 41 teams employ ongoing staff; 277.15 total FTE; average ongoing staff size 6.7 FTE;
- **Fixed term staff:** 20 teams employ fixed term staff; 21 teams employ no fixed term staff; total 33 FTE nationally, average fixed term staff size is 0.8.
- **Casual staff:** 15 teams employ some form of casual staff; 26 employ no casual staff; 1 team is only casual; casual advisors 102, FTE, average casual staff size is 6.8.
- **Students / Peers**<sup>2</sup>: 17 Teams (41%) employ students as Peer Leaders or Advisors.

It is difficult to draw any major conclusions out of these numbers other than to say, although one might wish to see less casualisation and more ongoing staff, the fact that ongoing outnumber fixed term staff may be viewed as a positive, as is the fact that casual staff are able to be offered work in the profession.

This survey question also asked what other staff roles or titles existed in teams. Results were extensive and spread across almost all teams to varying degrees of presence:

Academic Developer, Academic Integrity Officer, Academic Lead, Academic Support Programs Coordinator, Admin variations (Admin Officer, Administration, Administrative Assistant), Casual student partners, Convenor Conversation group leaders (students), Designated Cohorts Coordinator / Officer, Digital & Design Officer, Digital Capability Adviser, Digital Literacy Trainer, Discipline Coordinator, Discipline Lead Experiential Learning, Discipline

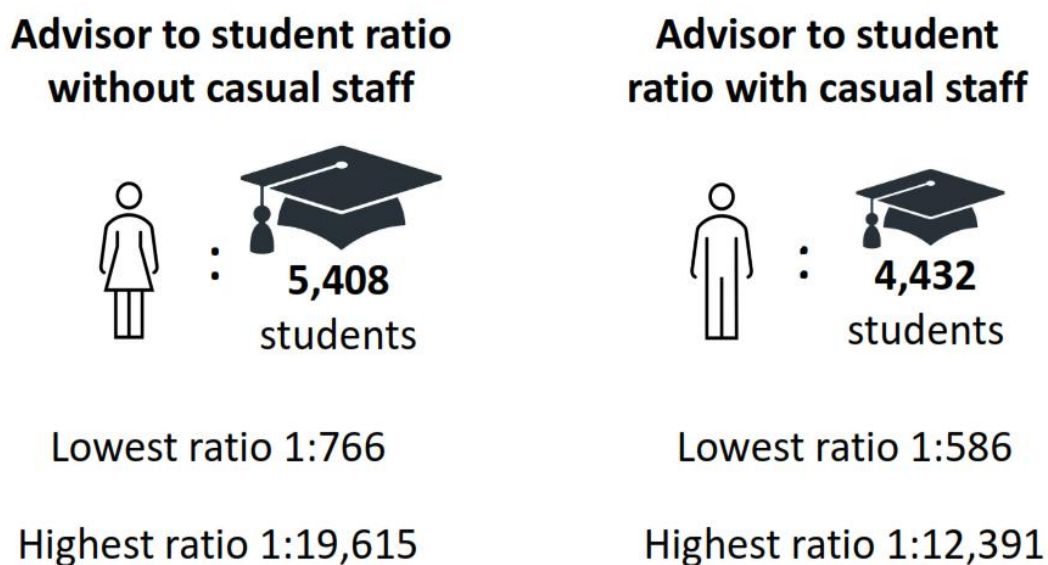
<sup>1</sup> 1 team employs no ongoing or fixed term staff, only 5 casuals.

<sup>2</sup> The Students/Peers number may be larger, but as it was not specifically asked for, many teams may not have thought to volunteer the information.

Librarian / (or just) Librarians, Educational Designer / Services Assistant / Services manager, Math Skills Advisors, Learning Strategist, Partners, PASS Coordinator / Leader / Manager, Peer Academic Programs Manager / Learner Coach Coordinator / Learning Coordinator / Programs Co-ordinator / Programs Officer / Support Coordinator, Project Officer, Resource Developer, Skills Immersion Coordinator, Student Equity Officer, Team Coordinator, Technical Learning Designer, Writing coaches.

What this list points to is that, apart from common terms such as Manager or Librarian, a great range of titles exist in the ALL profession and, at the same time, a great range of actual differing roles as well. While there exists some understandable uncertainty around job security, as evidenced by the staffing breakdowns above, one might conclude that the profession has also branched out in terms of breadth of roles conducted under its auspices.

Emerging out of the staffing count questions, coupled with institutional headcount figures, a view of staff to student ratios can now be framed. Figure 3 shows national average ratios of ALL staff to students in two scenarios: when casual staff are not taken into account, the ratio is **1 advisor to 5,408** students, this drops by 18% to **1:4,432** when casuals are taken into account. Interestingly, the ALL team that drops to the lowest ratio with casuals at 1:586 manages this with around 20 casual student advisors.



**Figure 3.** Average advisor to student ratios without and with casual staff.

### 3.2. Nature of individual consultations

In a clear gap in the research, teams were not asked perhaps the most obvious question: what they called individual consultations in their team.

Their answers in other parts of the survey and existing literature see them variously termed as *individual consultations* (ICs) or just *consultations*, *individual appointments*, *individual teaching* (more broadly), *face-to-face*, *one-to-ones* or *1-1s*.

1-1 and individual consultations are used interchangeably here.

#### 3.2.1. Offering of person-facilitated 1-1 student advising service

Participants were asked whether their team offers some form of person-facilitated 1-1 student advising service: all 41 teams, 100%, indicated they did.

### 3.2.2. Form of Advisor-facilitated 1-1 student advising service

A follow up question asked in what form 1-1 academic skills advising services are offered at the institution.

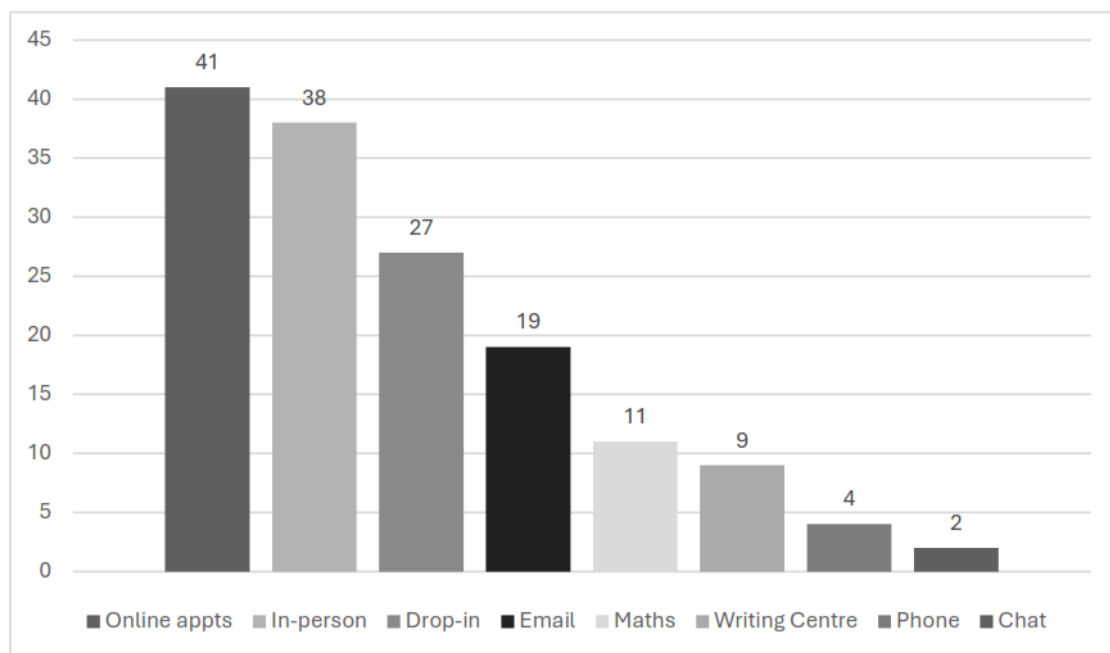
Figure 4 shows all 41 teams offer online person-facilitated appointments while 93% offer in-person 1-1 appointments and 66% offer drop-ins pointing to a clear commitment to the provision of some form of person-facilitated 1-1 services.

If it can be assumed that value is implicit in provision, then it is clear, at the time of this survey at least, person-facilitated 1-1 academic skills services were clearly valued by the teams that provide them, and by extension, the institutions that fund their provision.

Teams were also asked to provide details of how the 1-1 services are provided, 28 institutions provided breakdowns:

- 22 institutions (53%) offer online appointments (e.g. via Zoom) as their majority service format, while 6 institutions offer 90-100% online 1-1 service
- 6 institutions (14%) offer in-person / on-campus appointments as their majority service format.

These, albeit limited, figures suggest that the preferred or most common way of delivering 1-1s is online via Zoom, although some form of in-person offering in the 1-1 space is also very common.



**Figure 4.** Medium of delivery for advisor-facilitated 1-1 student advising services.

### 3.2.3. Offerings in place of, alongside or complementary to Advisor-facilitated 1-1 services

Teams were asked whether they offered any other services in place of, alongside or complementary to advisor-facilitated 1-1 services. 99% answered affirmatively, with one team, in a possible misconstruing of the question, answered in the negative, yet supplied answers suggesting they do.

This is an area where there is some overlap, at least between two parts of the answers, with 37 of the 41 teams (90%) offering workshops with variations, such as generic/open call, embedded/course or discipline-specific and Orientation, while 28 (70%) of teams offer discipline specific support including, again, workshops, as well as advice to academic staff, teaching 'in unit'

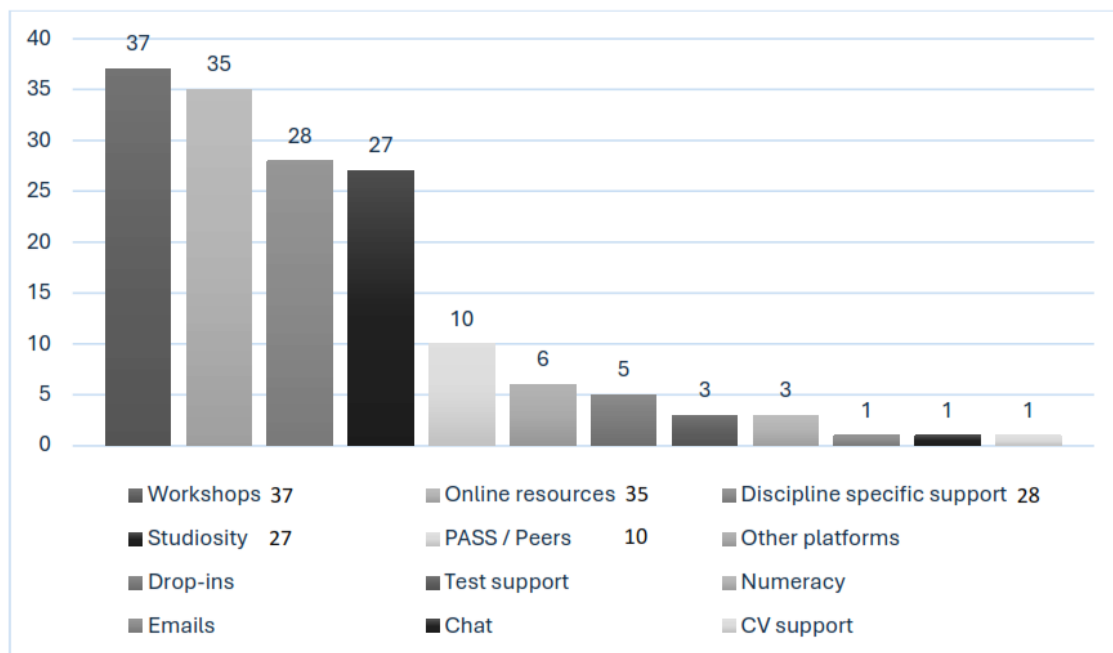
and review, which may refer to curriculum and/or assessment review. Online resources are offered by 35 teams (87%), e.g. website, hub, LMS or static resources (e.g. tipsheets) and this number may well be higher.

Interestingly, 27 (65%) teams offer Studiosity as a resource alongside of their own team offerings in the support space. This will be discussed, below.

Other offerings:

- 10 teams offer some type of student-grounded programs such as PASS, student-led activities, peer support, Study buddies, Peer Chat online, Mentor program and Peer assisted learning.
- 6 teams use other programs or platforms: Microsoft Copilot; Tutor.com; Brainfuse; Achieve @ Uni; LinkedIn Learning; Basic Key Skills Builder (BKSB)
- 5 teams offer drop-ins – this number is higher, as 27 teams indicated they conduct drop-ins in an earlier question
- 4 offer test support in the form of Post-Entry Language Assessment (PELA), Diagnostic English Language Assessment (DELA) and/or Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education (LANTITE)
- 3 offer Numeracy / Maths stats support
- 1 offers an ‘email enquiry service’
- 1 offers Employability / CV support.

Figure 5 provides an overview of these other offerings.



**Figure 5.** Offerings in place of, alongside or complementary to advisor-facilitated 1-1 services.

What this suite of offerings clearly suggests is that ALL teams are engaged in a full range of roles with which to complement the work of the 1-1 space, some to a greater degree than others. One of the main roles is the work carried out in the group context, that of the workshop or presentation. With 90% of teams indicating they carry out workshops of some form – generic/open call, embedded/course or discipline-specific, Orientation – and another 70% of teams including workshops in their discipline-specific support, one suspects the actual number of teams that deliver

some type of group workshop or presentation program might be closer to 100%. It is, after all, a well-used, scalable method of putting across academic skills development as one part of the ALL ‘triumvirate’ of 1-1s, resources and group work.

This offering of both 1-1s and group work in the form of a range of workshops or presentations represents an interesting interdependent relationship within ALL work, one that contradicts common problematisation of individual consultation which casts them as “a costly service to provide” (Kelly et al., 2024, p. 6). Speaking to this financial question, critics of the 1-1 argue they are an unaffordable luxury which are not scalable as, say, group teaching contexts are. In purely financial terms, they are expensive *when viewed as isolated events*.

However, 1-1s are not just isolated events. Kate Chanock (2007) argues, correctly, that the “value of individual teaching is seriously underestimated” (p. A1) because what is learned in the 1-1 informs wider ALL work. This was the premise of her seminal paper, *Valuing individual consultations as input into other modes of teaching* and, more broadly, the subject of the entire [2<sup>nd</sup> LAS conference](#) in 1996 at La Trobe University titled, *What do we learn from teaching one-to-one that informs our work with larger numbers*, convened by Chanock. In her 2007 paper, Chanock maintains that the only way to really understand students’ skills or knowledge gaps is by talking to them about specific tasks in 1-1 contexts with their papers, which in turn, results in larger group teaching being a richer, more pointed, more persuasive experience; in other words, that 1-1s have an important and directly informative role for other ALL work. Consequently, I propose that if 1-1s do inform work in the wider-reaching (i.e. more scalable) contexts, which includes workshops, presentations and resource development, then it stands to reason that there is a direct line from what is learned in 1-1s to these wider-reaching contexts. There is also a less obvious or less visible flow-on effect where students leave a successful 1-1 and tell other students about the learning – we know this happens, students tell us they do so. As such, this then constitutes a very clear ‘referred’ or flow-on scalability effect of 1-1s that is not accounted for, acknowledged or perhaps even recognised by those who question their feasibility. Viewed through this fiscal neoliberal lens, I must agree with Chanock’s (2007) proposition that the value of 1-1s *is* seriously underestimated.

#### 3.2.4. Comments around the use and impact of Studiosity

Another controversial area is that of the use of Studiosity. Thoughts on this form of advice provision are clearly mixed with positive responses noting the “*AI version of Studiosity ... has actually been helpful for our team*”, and “*increased accessibility [to feedback services] due to Studiosity’s use of AI-Powered feedback*” and that it was introduced “*two years ago but this has not affected demand for one to one support.*”

Others were neutral in comments: one team “*stopped assignment submissions for feedback in 2023. This service for students is now all conducted through Studiosity Plus*”, with another noting, “*Levels of the Studiosity service have varied over the past 5 years due to budget. We have been settled with it being available to first year students only.*”

However, many comments around the use of Studiosity were mixed or less favourable, for example:

- “Studiosity was also offered to the students, but this was discontinued.”
- “Team was reduced in size at the end of 2022 as a result of a restructure and introduction of Studiosity.”
- “Studiosity reviewers provide useful feedback on the nitty-gritty of spelling and sentence structure, but have little to say about overall relevance and quality. Some seem to have preconceptions about what a ‘college paper’ should look like and find it difficult to comment meaningfully on different kinds of writing.”
- “Our experience with Studiosity has been mixed. Sometimes, the support offered is ok. However, they don’t always refer appropriately to our resources. We prefer students to

access our Peer Academic Mentoring service for more appropriate one-to-one peer-facilitated support.”

- “We’re using the AI version of Studiosity in 2025 (the main benefit is the unlimited access, but there are disadvantages compared to the human version).”

Some of these comments speak to a direct negative effect – team size reduction – and a contextual ‘insider’ knowledge that institutional ALL staff bring to the advising space that perhaps externally provided sources do not when they speak of ‘college papers’ or a lack of understanding of particular genres required in specific learning contexts. This valuing of the institutional contextual knowledge that ALL advisors possess will be returned to later in the paper.

### 3.2.5. Total 1-1s delivered in 2024

Participants were asked to supply a figure for total individual appointments and drop-ins, not including 1-1 services delivered by external services, such as Studiosity. *N* here = 36 with 5 teams not providing answers.

Nationally, ALL teams worked with **83,027** students in 2024, the average number of 1-1s delivered being **2,365** per team, the highest 7,940 and a low of 235. These total and average figures seem to directly call into question claims by Walkinsaw et al. (as cited in Kelly et al., 2024) that individual appointment uptake “tends to be low” (p. 6). It also casts shade on claims by Macnaught et al. (as cited in Kelly et al., 2024) that students possibly perceive a 1-1 consultation to have “no academic value, no relevance, or it is a remedial option” (p. 6). The sheer volume of students worked with by ALL teams in 2024 – which, if all 41 teams supplied figures, would be closer to 90,000, given the delivery average – contradicts or, at a minimum, calls into question all three claims.

As table 2 shows, two teams delivered over 5,000 1-1s in 2024, with the bulk of teams (54%) delivering between 1,000-3,000 appointments.

**Table 2.** Total 1-1s delivered by range.

Range total of 1-1s	Number of teams
>5,000	2
4,000-5,000	3
3,000-4,000	3
2,000-3,000	10
1,000-2,000	12
<1,000	6

Reach statistics can be derived which this report frames in two ways: appointments as a ratio to student headcount and/or appointments reaching a percentage of the student population. (Note that since some students access services more than once per year, the following ratios do not indicate the number of unique students seen.)

- Average ratio of 1 appointment for every 22 students with a high of 1.1 appointments for every student and a low of 1 appointment for every 208 students by headcount.
- Average reach of appointments as a % of headcount – up to **11%** of student body reached; High 110% / Low 0.5%.

The highest ratio of more than one appointment per student and highest percentage reach of 110% were achieved by the same ALL team, the only one to facilitate more appointments than students with 4,962 appointments delivered to a student body of 4,500.

Further to this, respondents were asked whether the overall figure for the instances of 1-1 services delivered by their team increased, decreased or remained approximately the same for the past 5 years. Here, 39 teams provided answers:

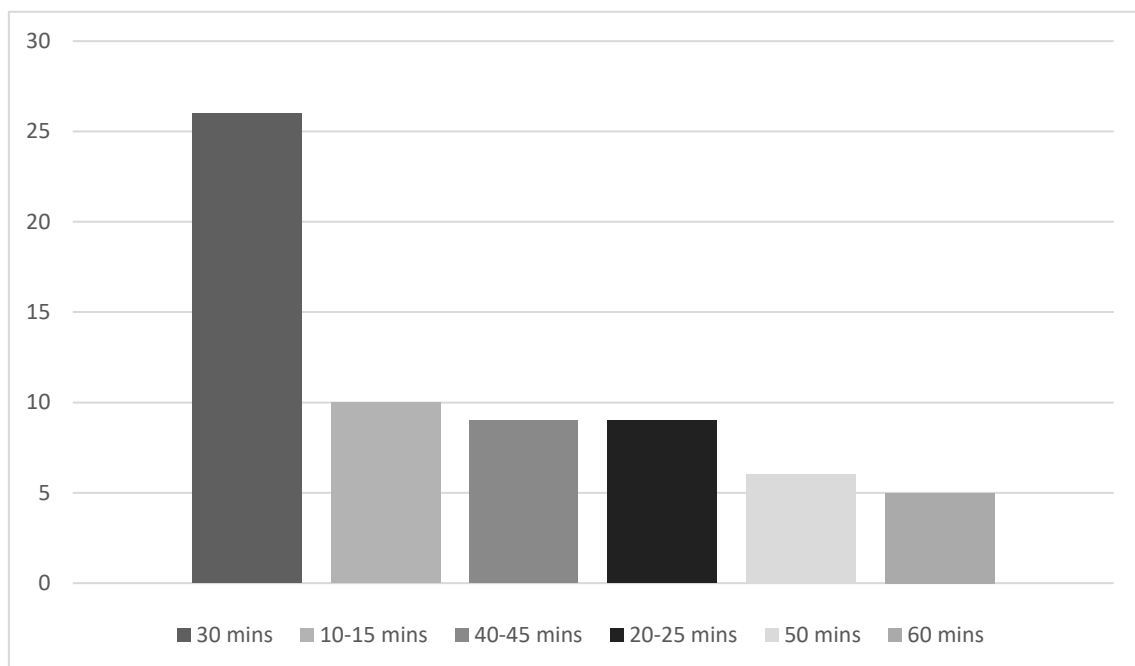
- Increased 22 (56%)
- Remained approximately the same 12 (30%)
- Decreased 5 (14%)

The trend is noteworthy in that it seems to, again, raise questions around claims that 1-1s are not feasible, unsustainable and problematic revealing that, for 86% of the teams that provided an answer, the number of 1-1s has either increased or been maintained over the last five years. This points to a resilience of the role and its value that, again, as suggested, may be underestimated.

### 3.3. Parameters of service

#### 3.3.1. Length of individual 1-1 services

Teams were asked about session or appointment length of time for their individual services and answers, as expected, were very varied with one clear standout – the 30-minute appointment (Figure 6). Teams offer multiple time variations dependent on level, need and service type; for example, teams may offer all three of 30-minute general appointments, 1-hour graduate research appointments and 15-minute drop-ins.



**Figure 6.** Length of individual 1-1 services.

Of the five 50-minute responses, three specifically mentioned these were for Higher Degree Research students.

Other answers included:

- Drop-ins with no set time, usually open for 1-3 hours with no mention of individual engagement length.
- Sessions provided for follow-up or ongoing appointments (e.g. students with needs) are as long as needed.
- Time ranges from 20 minutes through to 2 hours for 1:1 consultations. The average consultation is about 45 minutes to 1 hour (for this team).

These figures point to a variation in the provision of 1-1 services to students in that level, need and a sense of flexibility about how they are provided are all part of the delivery context.

The 30-minute appointment seems to represent an optimal length of time allowing for substantive advising and feedback to occur, particularly in reference to written work. This author's ALL team transitioned from all 1-1s being one hour in length to 30-minute appointments (Graduate Research student appointments remained at one hour) and offers an illustrative example. The change to the shorter time meant that not only could more students be seen in a workday, it shifted the positioning of 1-1s from an editorial to a more developmental orientation. This brought the appointment context very much in line with its mission of fostering independence, self-efficacy and self-regulation with an eye on service dependency.

### 3.3.2. When services are offered

Availability of service period depends on service offered. 1-1 services are offered all year by 36 teams (88%), while 13 teams (31%) also have some form of restricted offering, for example, only in semester for some services.

### 3.3.3. Access to 1-1 services

Most ALL teams offer 1-1 services to any enrolled student 29 (71%) at their institution, while 13 (31%) also have student access restrictions in place, e.g. not HDR students, not overseas campus students, 'complex' cases or at risk, while 7 (17%) take students on referral.

### 3.3.4. Access parameters / limits to 1-1 services

Many ALL teams have service limits built in to provide 1-1 services to as many students as possible (i.e. for equity reasons), and to manage dependency. In addition:

- 17 teams (41%) restrict access to 1 appointment per week
- 9 (22%) allow HDR / GR students to have longer or more appointments or have a dedicated team for that cohort
- 9 (22%) offer equity-identified student appointments
- 7 (17%) have no stated access parameters.

Other variants or parameters included a quite compelling multiplicity of responses, for example:

Fair Go or Fair use policy / 1 appointment per semester / 4 appts per semester / 3 appointments maximum 'by teaching period of 6 weeks' / 3 appointments per term / 2 appointments per week / 4 consults per trimester / 1 consult per 3 days / 6 per semester / HDRs can access up to 10 consults across their candidature / Limited number of appointments, drop-in unlimited / case by case / not for proofreading / not for assignment feedback. This last is interesting, as it is I suspect for many ALL teams, the *raison d'être* for their 1-1 services.

It must be emphasised that access parameters reveal a great deal of variation in how many appointments students have access to, who can access them and how often. There seems to be a clear eye on dependency or overuse with one team that has no restrictions offering the caveat that, "*frequent flyers*' may be noted and advised to avoid overuse of our services". Another made note of their, "*Fair Use Principle: Learning advisor consultations aim to empower students towards independence. Overbooking (too many bookings) or cross-booking (booking multiple LAs [Learning Advisors]) will be reviewed by Learning Centre staff*" again pointing to a clear awareness of dependency factors at play. Others noted appointments were for referred students only, regularity being '*dependent on need*', equity and special consideration students. As one respondent put it, they look at "*reducing frequency as skill development and self-efficacy are aims of individual support*" which speaks to the developmental rationale and intentionality around 1-1 services access parameters, which is clearly not something gen AI can manage, as yet.

### 3.3.5. How staff-facilitated 1-1 services factor into staff work week

This question asked respondents to describe how person-facilitated 1-1 services factor into a staff member's work week, in other words, what sort of role prominence individual appointments have.

Answers indicated that most ALL advisors have scheduled availability for 1-1s in their work week with comments falling into three categories ( $N = 39$ ):

- **Neutral:** 15 (38%) answers were neutrally toned or worded focusing on a number of appointments advisors are expected to take or as a percentage of workload for the week
- **Positive:** 12 (31%) answers were positively toned or worded indicating 1-1s were 'core', a clear priority / main focus / formed the bulk of the week
- **'Soft' negative:** 12 (31%) answers implied service was just another role along with others or is restricted

On the question of how a work week is organised or given over to 1-1s, participants were also asked whether their team employed casual academics, professional staff or students to deliver 1-1 services during any time of the semester. Answers here were almost even with 56% saying yes, 44% no.

Of the 23 teams that answered affirmatively here, 14 teams (61%) indicated they bring in students in a range of roles including Peer Learning Advisers, Peer Academic Mentors, Student Mentors and Writing Coaches, while casual staff were mentioned by 10 teams. 15 teams mentioned some type of restriction on bringing in staff such as only during semester or peak, to 'triage drop ins', to do 'drop ins only', manage queues, provide resources or brought in 'when money allows' pointing to a financial aspect teams need to take into account.

## 3.4. Broader perspectives

### 3.4.1. Impact of availability of gen AI tools and applications on the provision of 1-1 services

Respondents were asked what impact, if any, the availability of gen AI tools and applications have had on the provision of Academic Skills 1-1 services at their institution. Many answers incorporated a range of thoughts, with ideas broken down as follows:

- Not sure / No impact 16 (39%)
- Increased academic integrity consulting / referred students / ethical use of AI 14 (34%)
- Increased student queries about it 11 (27%)
- Uni went with Studiosity 9 (22%)
- AI as positive effect (Uni increasing human service, no effect on bookings) 5
- Lack of university direction 3
- Reduced number / availability of 1-1s 2
- Changed assessment 2
- Resource development or creation around gen AI 2
- AI as after-hours provider of support 1
- Working with students to understand the policy and ethical use of gen AI 1
- AI as threat to advisor position 1.

Perhaps in a reflection of the still-prevailing wider educational uncertainty around the impact of gen AI, most respondents said that it had yet to have an impact or they were unsure of what impact there was, if any. There is clearly increased activity around gen AI use with 34% of teams having experienced more referred students and academic integrity consulting situations, one mentioning this as part of a 're-education program', while 27% of teams are seeing increased student queries about gen AI use, alluding to the fact that tertiary education is still coming to terms with the technology.

Studiosity again is mentioned by respondents (22%), with sentiments towards it, as addressed previously, being diverse not just across teams but within them. One respondent spoke to this saying there, “*are mixed feelings within the team towards gen AI and the direction the university has adopted*”. In relation to gen AI, one respondent, however, speaks to a possible future state describing a hybrid service model which may well become the norm saying:

*We've recently transitioned to the AI version of Studiosity which has actually been helpful for our team. Because of the limited number of LAs [Learning Advisors], we often advise students to get feedback from WF+ and then use that feedback as part of their IC [Individual Consultation] with the learning advisor.*

This approach points to a combined-agent model of advising in line with the Staged Model for Hybrid Feedback put forward by Zhang et al. (2025, p. 6) where gen AI can be the first responder at the task level provision of feedback before the student moves to a second stage response with a human advisor for higher level advice. The third stage of the model has students then acting independently on both sets of advice in an autonomous, self-regulated outcome. It also speaks to a model following the dichotomous construct of feedback put forward by Corbin et al. (2024) in which **extra-recognitive** feedback – typically information transfer as provided by an agent not capable of mutual recognition – is furnished by the gen AI platform and would occur in the first stage. **Recognitive** feedback is that provided by a human agent capable of mutual recognition of a present other and is typically more nuanced and affective, occurs in the second stage. Another respondent’s comments that 1-1s are “*becoming more and more sounding boards for ideas as opposed to just ‘writing checkers’*” seems to also speak to the staged and transitional construct of the extra-recognitive writing check to the recognitive and more dialogic ‘sounding board’.

Importantly, both of these models fit in with a complementary, hybrid construct of 1-1 advising that sees human and non-human agents working to their respective strengths. Indeed, however, uncertainty around the future of human advisors and their place within a gen AI landscape is, while perhaps not a major issue as it currently stands, still a concern within teams with one respondent saying they (ALL advisors) are, “*potentially disposable in the face of AI*”. That said, a hybrid model in some form may well be a more logical and likely scenario seen with greater frequency in coming years as opposed to the proposition advanced in some quarters that sees gen AI as a replacement for human advisors.

#### 3.4.2. Changes to 1-1 service provision in the last 5 years

Respondents were asked whether there had been changes to 1-1 service provision in the last five years. Unsurprisingly, in a period characterised by flux, 90% answered yes, 10% no. Again, answers incorporated a range of thoughts, with ideas summarised as follows:

- Transition to online / increase in online services 17 (41%), 7 of these cited COVID as the cause
- Reduction in staffing (10) or services provided (4) 14 (34%)
- Studiosity services introduced 10 (25%)
- General / ‘Other’ changes (e.g. classification change, name change, positional change, service change e.g. referral only) 10 (25%)
- Increase in staffing or service provision 4 (10%)
- Negative emotional / Affective change 4 (10%) e.g. toxicity, pressure, devaluing of the advisor role
- No change 4 (10%).

Answers note a variety of changes, the biggest or most-often mentioned being the transition to online arising out of the COVID pandemic. Teams also mentioned a reduction in staffing and a transition to or adoption of Studiosity, again pointing to its uptake within institutions, but still

seemingly alongside of a human-facilitated services rather than directly replacing them, again, speaking to a resilience of the 1-1 and a possible shift towards a combined or hybrid approach.

### 3.4.3. Main advantages for the institution providing person-facilitated 1-1 advising services

Here respondents were asked about advantages they saw in retaining people in the 1-1 advising context. The answers here were particularly nuanced, varied and very detailed, often with many reasons provided within responses and, as such, answers required extensive ‘picking apart’ and a thematic allocation into categories according to reasons mentioned. These reasons were classified as follows (percentages given out of 41):

- Institutional or context-specific knowledge / Contextualised support 22 (53%)
- Tailored to need / advisors understand the students & needs / individualised 21 (51%)
- 1-1s inform other AS work / create connections with academics 15 (36%)
- Affective / relational aspect / engage with a person / human connection 11 (27%)
- Referrals to ALL team and from team to other services 10 (25%)
- Safe space / support / Work with students with needs (e.g. high risk or equity groups) 4 (10%)
- Trustworthy / normalises help seeking 4 (10%)
- Limitations of Studiosity / External providers 4 (10%)
- Says institution values support 3 (7%)
- Has positive effect on retention / completion 2 (5%).

The most frequently cited advantage to people-facilitated 1-1s (53%) is that ALL advisors have an ‘in-house’, contextual knowledge of the institution to draw on, enabling them to develop and leverage their understandings of academics’ expectations, university policy, assessment types, marking criteria/rubrics, assessment practice and culture, and institutional norms; or as one respondent summarised, the advisor “*understands the nuances, expectations of the institute*”. This ‘in-house’ knowledge is clearly an advantage over what gen AI platforms can offer students, as was the second most frequently appearing sentiment. Over half of respondents (51%) said that human advisors tailor advice to need, they understand the cohort and that the support is individualised and personalised. Although gen AI platforms are able to provide advice particular to the paper a student is seeking help with, they are not able to personalise the advice to the depth and nuance of human advisors with at times very particular needs students, for example “*first-in-family, domestic EAL students, mature-aged*”. This advantage is related to the connection aspect of advising, with another participant noting recurring 1-1s with an advisor “*remove need to repeat their personal situation, opportunity to develop skills and for self determination*”.

Over one-third of answers (36%) mentioned the way in which 1-1s inform other work that ALL staff do, speaking to a previously discussed feature of the value of individual work. Here, answers mentioned the 1-1 “*approach allows advisors to directly communicate with teaching staff*”, “*allows us to build relationships with courses/unit convenors and design interventions that target specific student’s needs*”, have “*input into curriculum*”, they “*keep staff who deliver workshops informed of student needs and so workshops address needs and are not ‘theoretical’*”, and in so doing, 1-1s form “*part of a broader support framework*”. Again, these comments add weight to the point that far from being the expensive, non-scalable isolated events they are thought to be, 1-1s have a value beyond single students, directly informing our wider work and, in so doing, have an inferred scalability that, again, may well be underestimated, underappreciated and misunderstood.

The next most frequent response at 27% concerned the human connection and affective-relational aspects of human advising, a response that is adjacent to and has overlap with the student connection/personalised approach of the second most frequent response. Here, most respondents

spoke of the human connection, the “*sense of belonging*”, “*empathy and pastoral care*”, that people “*like talking to humans and trust them more*”, that “*more than anything though, the opportunity to connect with someone face to face (that could be in person or via Zoom) is a preference for many students*”. Finally, in relation to gen AI support, provision of a human-facilitated service, “*tells the students that someone, a person, is available to them, in an era of increasing chat bots and electronic answering services, this is vital*”. This response speaks to the value of the person connection in an increasingly tech-immersive world.

Summarising the remaining responses, 25% of respondents mentioned the importance of not only having students being referred to ALL teams but also the capability of people to enact a pastoral care role in being able to refer on to other services. 10% talked of somewhat related aspects of 1-1s being ‘*trustworthy*’, safe spaces that normalise help seeking. Indeed, one respondent links this aspect to their team’s profile saying that the 1-1 service:

*greatly enhances the visibility of our services and enables us to provide feedback on our work with students, which is quite unique. We work with students across colleges, year levels and ability levels, and are generally seen as a safe space, so we have insights that some other parts of the university don't have access to.*

Indeed, neither does gen AI.

#### 3.4.4. Further comments

Finally, the respondents were asked for any further comments on the provision of human 1-1 academic skills advising services. Responses fell into two categories: disadvantages or challenges of the 1-1 advising context, and the importance of the practice / value of human advising.

In order not to misrepresent the thoughts of respondents, these are offered not as aggregated numbers and percentages, but as selected quotes.

#### **Disadvantages or challenges of the 1-1 advising context:**

- “not sustainable or practical to continue to ramp up to meet the insatiable demand”/ “highly resource-intensive, requiring significant time, staffing, and funding” / “current financial landscape of tertiary education there will be cuts in all areas” / “SSAF (Student Services Amenities Funding) funded support at risk”
- “constant struggle to be heard, valued, supported and promoted in our context” / “easy target in restructures and get tossed around the university” / “I think our team is on its way out”
- “a challenge due to the significant stigma associated with seeking academic help”
- “low student awareness”
- “it's quite siloed”
- “students not showing up impacts availability of our services for other students”
- “challenging to provide help to the students who most need it in a timely manner”
- “not keeping up the pace ... with Gen AI” / “impact of Gen AI”

#### **Importance of the practice / value of human advising:**

- “Humans are irreplaceable”
- “Incredibly popular with students”
- “It is a selling point for the University.”
- “Essential aspect of the whole range of support”
- “Our signature practice, without it we are nothing”
- “Identified as the most essential support service in the university”

- “Education is a human centred activity and fundamentally needs people as its core”
- “Every consultation confirms that humans are irreplaceable. Students do not know what they don't know.”
- “Increase access to students who are usually marginalised and make a difference by supporting them to develop the skills they need for university and life”
- “Feedback we get from students constantly reiterates the 'value add' of these services to student engagement (and satisfaction with their university experience).”

The main disadvantages or challenges espoused for the provision of 1-1 are that they are not sustainable or practical, are resource-intensive and expensive. However, while in and of themselves, 1-1s as individual events are expensive, this paper proposes that they play an underappreciated and perhaps misunderstood role because of their perception as simple one-off, isolated engagements. Viewed in more nuanced, wider terms of how they directly inform all other ALL work, they are not as cost prohibitive as they may be perceived to be.

Speaking again to the marginalisation narrative prevalent in the ALL landscape, comments included, “*a struggle to be heard*”, low awareness, being “*an easy target in restructures*” and “*on the way out*”. These comments do not represent the majority of perspectives, however, they do speak to a broader uncertainty many managers, teams and advisors feel.

On the other hand, the service is valued greatly by students and staff, that is clear, with one respondent optimistically noting, “*demand continues to increase over time, it is one way we are able to distinguish ourselves from other providers*” and others saying “*for many students it is the difference between staying and going*”, and a “*secret arrangement' helping them to succeed*”. Another respondent spoke to the pastoral care aspect saying,

*We help students who have never studied at university ... and we see positive outcomes for many of these students that I don't believe would happen (without a lot of stress and additional time) if we didn't provide the 1:1 consultations and other opportunities.*

Another respondent said, “*A lot will be lost, both to students and to advisers, if 1-1 consultations ever disappeared entirely, unless some other form of rich adviser-student interactions took their place*”. Both of these responses speak to the (currently) counterfactual ‘what if?’ question that many human service professions consistently face.

To finish, another quote is worth reproducing in full here as it sums up the human advisor context succinctly:

*Sometimes students only need to connect with us once to get personalised and individualised attention, and importantly for someone to listen and encourage them forward. The aim of 1:1s is for students not to need them eventually as we want to facilitate the development and growth of their academic skills and confidence, but 1:1s should always be offered as part of the learning support of the institution.*

#### 4. Conclusions

Examining the landscape of 1-1 service offerings of most of the ALL teams in Australian higher education institutions has been a very interesting and more positively revealing and professionally validating experience than this author anticipated.

All 41 teams surveyed deliver person-facilitated 1-1 services in some form indicating that, for now, the individual appointment remains a very much valued fixture in the service offerings of ALL teams. Results reveal a great deal of variation in all aspects of the ALL role, however, some summary points are as follows:

- ALL teams are most likely to be known as **Academic Skills** or some variation of such.
- Advising staff are most commonly called **Learning Advisors** or **Advisers**.
- Teams are most commonly located in a **central team of professional staff**.
- We work in an average sized university of around **35,000** students in an average team of **7.5 FTE** staff without casuals and **14.5** with.
- We work within a staff to student ratio average of **1:5,408** without casuals and **1:4,432** with casuals, and with **1 appointment** for every **22 students** on average, which represents up to **11%** of the institutional student population (“up to” because there was an unknown number of repeat visits by students).
- Nationally, we delivered over **83,000** 1-1s in 2024 at an average of **2,365** appointments per institution, noting that the actual total number is higher as not all teams supplied figures.
- 1-1s are mostly delivered **online** yet also in-person and over the past five years this number has either **increased** or **stayed the same** for most teams (86%), indicating take up and value are still high.
- 1-1s are typically **30-minute** appointments but can be longer and shorter, are mostly available **all year** round to any enrolled student and generally have **dependency and equity parameters** around the number of appointments any given student can access.
- Teams are still unsure of the impact of gen AI.
- The main advantages of provision of person-facilitated 1-1 advising services, are institutional or context-specific knowledge, understanding of the students, 1-1s as informing other academic skills work and the affective/relational aspects of the role.
- Finally, while voicing concerns over the **financial viability of 1-1s**, many comments also spoke to their value as being **popular, irreplaceable** and **essential**.

What can be concluded here is that individual consultations are still a widely delivered and valued role both by the students (given the numbers of 1-1s) and by ALL staff. They are seen as a core role but when viewed in economic terms as isolated events they are thought of as expensive and unscalable; however, when viewed for what they are, as informative activities for other wider ranging work ALL staff do, then they can be viewed as economically feasible and indirectly scalable.

Perhaps most importantly, individual appointments are a source of human contact for students in an increasingly tech-driven world, offering someone to connect to in often huge yet depersonalising institutions, a source of and opportunity for a dialogic exchange with an academic professional. As ALL professionals, we leverage our personal and institutional knowledge in these valuable exchanges with students in learning moments that can last 30 minutes or, literally, years. Perhaps it is appropriate then that the last word here references time; as one respondent voiced what I hope most of us feel regarding 1-1s: *“Long may they continue!”*

## Disclaimer

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time to answer what turned out to be a robust set of Qualtrics questions: thank you, I hope you will enjoy the benefits of receiving the full set of data when you do get it.

## Appendix A. Questionnaire

1. What is the Academic Skills team or unit in your institution called?
2. What is the role title of the academic advising staff in your team? What are the advisors/advisers called?
3. Are your advisors classified as Academic, Professional or in some other way?
4. What is the approximate student population (headcount) of your institution?
5. What is the size and composition of your Academic Skills team?
6. How or where is the Academic Skills team situated within your institution?
7. Does your Academic Skills team offer some form of Advisor-facilitated 1-1 student advising service?
8. Does your Academic Skills team offer anything in place of, alongside or complementary to Advisor-facilitated 1-1 services?
9. In what form are 1-1 academic skills advising services offered at your institution?
10. Please provide details of how the 1-1 services in the previous question are provided.
11. How many total 1-1s did the people in your team deliver in 2024?
12. Has the overall figure for the instances of delivered 1-1 services delivered by your team increased, decreased or remained approximately the same for the past 5 years?
13. What is the length of individual 1-1 services delivered by your team?
14. When are these 1-1 services offered by your team?
15. Who has access to 1-1 services at your institution?
16. Are there any access parameters or special conditions attached to your team's 1-1 services?
17. Please briefly describe how staff-facilitated 1-1 services factor into a staff member's work week at your Academic Skills service.
18. Does your Academic Skills team employ casual academic, professional staff or students to deliver 1-1 services during any time of the semester?
19. What impact, if any, has the availability of Gen AI tools and applications had on the provision of Academic Skills 1-1 services at your institution?
20. Has the provision of Academic Skills 1-1 services undergone any changes at your institution in the past 5 years?
21. What, in your opinion, are the main advantages of the institution (not external providers) providing person-facilitated Academic Skills 1-1 advising services for students?
22. Do you have any further comments on the provision of 1-1 academic skills advising services where you work or more broadly?

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